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JOURNAL ON MUSIC & DANCE

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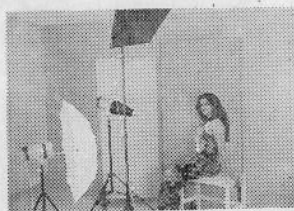
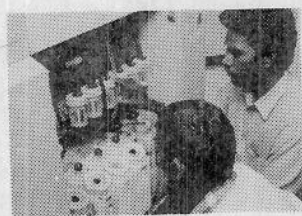
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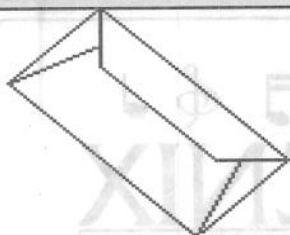
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Cover Photo by
N.SUNDARRAJ



READERS Write

Vidya Dadhathi Vinayam

The July-August issue of Phoenix has just reached me. The picture on the outer cover is a speaking likeness of the great gentleman. His pen portrait by SNC on page 14 is superb. It brings out the essence of the music and melody which are synonymous with Veena Doreswamy Iyengar.

The truism 'Vidya Dhadathi Vinayam' is nowhere seen as clearly as in our illustrious artiste. Yet I would with the box in which you have printed this article on pages 14 and 15 was not shadowed or shaded as it in no way improves the get up. Instead you could have decorated the edges with veena mala design and used ordinary black on white. It would have been clearer. No doubt you meant well.

Kusuma Rao, Bangalore

Magnificent Exposure

Story on Prathibha Prahlad (June 96) is superb. No other magazine in our country is giving such a magnificent exposure to our artistes as Phoenix.

Prathibha's contribution to dance and dancers is unique.

A.S.Madhavarao, Udipi

Empty Halls

Apropos to the letter by Anantharam of Bangalore (July August 96) regarding filling up programmes with artistes outside Karnataka.

I fully support his views to give opportunities to local artistes. But in most of the concerts of local artistes listeners are very few. The concert hall, though small, is never full.

The number of good performing artistes in our State is very less. Hence the organisers are left with no choice but to depend on artistes from other States.

Venkateshan, Bangalore

Enjoyable Calling AIR

I am a regular reader of PHOENIX since its first issue. And I must say that I enjoy reading it, especially the 'Calling AIR' by ESSENCE. We have been regularly reading the reviews of concerts regularly in newspapers. Most of the reviews are biased and do not have many persons who can present unbiased reviews.

But, the 'Calling AIR' is a welcome change from the regular stuff though, sometimes is a bit harsh.

Keep it up.

K.R.Sundareshan, Madras

Kumar Gandharva

'A Visit to Kumar Gandharva' (July 96) is very touching. Karnataka Government should come forward to preserve the tapes by converting them into CD's. Karnataka born artiste of repute deserves much more.

Snageetha Nrithya Academy and Karnataka Ganakala Parishat should join hands and support this project.

S.S.Deshpande, Pune

Correction

Laya Kala Nipuna is Palani Subramanya Pillai Award which was awarded to R.Visweswaran. H. Puttachar Memorial Award intended for pre-parangath artiste was presented to M.T. Rajakesari.

R.K.Srikantan Endowment programme was the symposium on Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer and not the concert of Maharajapuram Srinivasan. This concert was sponsored by the Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer Trust.

N.Sundarraj

Fusion

It is gratifying to note that PHOENIX is spreading its tentacles to other states (Mid Summer Musical Marvel).

Fusion between Karnataka and Tamilnadu should be stronger.

Suresh, Chitradurga

Informative

The July - August 96 issue has enthralled me. The article on Haridasa's contribution to Music by R.K. Srikantan is very informative and educative.

Dayanand, Mumbai

Attention Organisers

Music and dance institutions are requested to send their programmes to

The Editor, PHOENIX, 138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar, Bangalore 560009, before the first week of the month.

Editorial

A Disturbing Trend

Some of the Ranga-Praveshas (Arangetrams) in recent times have revealed a disturbing trend. In them pomp and opulence are seemingly taking precedence over aesthetic considerations. The ostentation that marked these events may well scare away pecuniarily less fortunate parents of talented youngsters from the art itself.

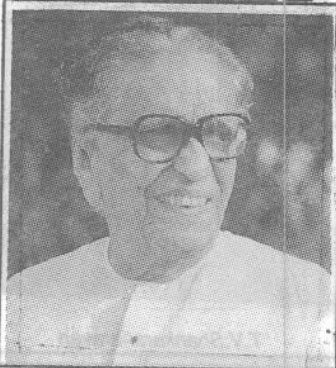
In one such instance as many as 16 persons, including accompanying musicians and other professional helpers were felicitated with mementoes, shawls and other accessories. That is besides the customary fees befitting the occasion. The debutante involved was a fatherless girl who could ill afford to fritter away her resources. The only consolation is that the Guru in this case was single sans the encumbrance of a wife and a father to add to the list of beneficiaries.

In two other cases, like in a couple of them in Shimoga around the same time, the agenda included sumptuous dinner befitting a wedding repast. All these are apparently in keeping with the Joneses, i.e. visiting NRIs for whom such events are an opportunity for a get-together with family and friends. They come in handy to do away with formal individual visits. If the other incidentals like theatre rental, stage decor, brochure, video, photographing, publicity etc., are added the amount could easily meet the expenses of an upper middle class marriage !

And all this for a debutante who may or may not take to dance seriously. But its repercussions on the one who is really talented, more serious and doesn't have the means could be utterly disastrous.

It is here that our academies, departments of culture, and youth services and the zonal centres can play a constructive role. As it is they earmark sizeable budgets to sponsor programmes by aspiring youngsters. A part of that outlay could be set apart to fund the Ranga Praveshas of deserving, indigent aspirants. That would be certainly more purposeful than many of the other so-called promotional activities. At any rate, it would not be less productive than the bestowal of the countless, unmonitored scholarships being doled out by the State Sangeet-Nritya Academy !

S.N.Chandrasekhar



CALLING AIR



Kavitha and Triveni Saralaya

Pantuvrali is one of the most commonly heard ragas on the concert stage. Hence it is not easy to make an instant appeal. But when a seasoned vocalist like R.K. Srikantan renders it, it attains a flavour all its own. With his well-preserved voice, honed perfectly to sruti the airing itself could be absorbing as one experienced in his recital on July 1, 8-30 a.m.

After the total gestalt in the alap,



Shakunthala Narasimhan

the popular kriti Sarasakshaparipalaya was effusive with a crisp 'niraval' and enlivening 'swaraprasthara' adorning the rendition. What a heart warming treat to start a day with!

On the previous morning, again 8.30 a.m. it was the Saralaya Sisters (Kavita and Triveni) who were on the air. Their alap for Shankarabharana was marked for its clarity, though falling short in its enduring quality. But the stately kriti Enduku Peddala anchored well to the lilting gait to leave a lingering effect. The way the duo handled the swaraprasthara between them was as impactful as it was refreshing.

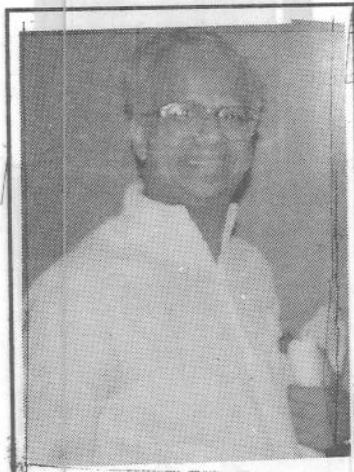
Pushpa Kashinath's veena recital (July 1, 9.30 a.m.) was as reposeful. If Nalinakanti just revealed a tranquil mood, Pushpa's Kalyani (Etavunara) was full of verve, verily affirmative of her grip on the instrument and the modal frame. The flowing 'swaraprasthara' embellishing the rendition enhanced its aural beauty.

A facile, tuneful voice enabled Vinayak Torvi (July 5, 8.30 a.m)

to sing with ease. As he meditatively started to intonate Bhairav, his searching mind surfaced, 'Balamava' the bandish in vilambit exfoliating with a flurry of racy 'sargams'. 'Darashanadevo', the drut ang was as lucid in its articulation to project a compact picture of the solemn raga.

The Kambodi piece Rangasayi by Kovaladi Kala assumed its sonority more due to the flourishes that marked the violin accompaniment of M. Nagaraj. No doubt, the young vocalist has a trained voice that traverses beyond two octaves with felicity. But she has yet to learn using it to achieve resonant exactitude. It is here M.K. Chenakeshava (July 6, 8.30) reveals. He has a voice that is honed to sruti as evidenced in his Shuddha Dhanyasi (Entanerchina). The rendition stood out for its tonal flourishes. But, sadly, they don't sound original, shades of Balamurali Krishna's sonority manifest in each and every sonant!

The veena concert of M.K. Saraswati (10-10 a.m July 7) justified the reputation she has built for herself in a distinguished career. It was packed with a few familiar melodies, a racy Ramachandra (Vasantha) giving her a sunny start. Varali (Mamava Meenakshi) and Shahana (Giripai) were the two ragas to receive a sustained attention. In either case the trite 'sangatis' flowed with resonant exac-



T.V. Shankaranarayan



Pushpa Kashinath

titude, the famed kritis acquiring a special delight due to the taut rhythm.

Padma Gurudutt (8.30 a.m. July 8) was in as reposeful a mood as she balmily intonated Shankarabharana (Nagalingam). The alap itself was coaxed with an array of saucy 'sangatis' to facilitate a meaningful deployment for the infrequently heard kriti.

The evocation in S. Shankar's recital (8.30 a.m. July 10) was exhilarating. If the Khamas piece helped him to bring about a true concert atmosphere, in Mukhari (Enta Ninne) his voice grew deeper and stronger to lend free reign to his manodharma. It was easy to see that Shankar has acquired an enduring capacity to captivate his listeners with enviable ease and efficiency. The violin solo by K.V. Raja Iyengar that followed (9.30 a.m.) was on predictable lines, pleasing sans the sparkle that one looks for in a senior artiste like him. His Ganamurthe (name of the raga too) was true to the form.

That night from Madras (9.15 p.m.) one chanced to hear a memorable concert, T.V. Shankaranarayan flanked by M.S. Gopalakrishnan on the violin

to arrive at a pleasing imagery of the melody. Etavunara, the kriti was redolent with fine touches, a sleek 'niraval' and spacious 'swara' passages adding glitter to the rendition.

Veteran MSG was in as fine a mettle, lending excellent support to the vocalist, himself complementing with measured and pleasing touches. Ramabhadran's sensitive percussive support enhanced the rhythmic overtones in the edifying recital.

Two rare kritis of Thyagaiaha, *Pakam (Murcha)* and *Muripemu Galige* (Mukhari) lent an enlivening touch to Shakuntala Narasimhan's recital on July 11 (9.15 a.m.). Her voice modulation, thanks to her felicity in the

and Vellore Ramabhadran on mridangam. An ideal trio indeed. Shankaranarayan's voice was at its best, his inspired rendition flowing mellifluously from the invocatory Nata piece itself. The number in Veera Vasantha was enriched by some sparkling 'swaraprasthara'. The alap for Kalyani was a full-throated essay, the respected vocalist using his resonant tonality

Hindustani style added to the aural impact in the rendition. Ramapriya (Matange) revelled with some tantalising 'sangatis' in the upper reaches, the kriti delineated with customary flourish.

R.A. Ramamani has the telling capacity to bring essence in a raga. Her essay for Simhendramadhyama (Ninne Nammiti) was characteristic with a trained voice that aligns perfectly with 'sruti'. Rama lent a dignified touch to a raga, a fleeting feeling highlighting the rendition in the popular Vasudevacharya kriti. Bhairavi (Raksha Bittare) was as elaborate in its aural edifice, the enunciation heightened with some lilting touches. The kriti was embellished with a full array of 'sargams' in sarvalagu. Sustained support by the staffers as accompanists was a special feature of the concert.

Geeta Murthy's vocal on the following day (8.30 a.m.) was also in a upbeat mood, though the sruti seemed a wee bit non-cooperative. But the form in her Vachaspati (Pahijagajjananii) was convincing.

The Hindustani vocal by Parameshwar Hegde, one of the senior students of Basavaraj Rajguru, at once revealed that he has a trained voice.



M.K. Saraswathi

His Kausi-Kanada (Rajanake Kripa) as it progressed in its sonorous alap grew with proper Nyasa and phraseology. The 'bandish' was chiselled with lovely taans, a quick denouement in the faster tempo leaving a fleeting feeling on the listener.

The South Zone hook-up on July 21 (10 p.m) was a surprise packet, Rohini Venkatachalam, the vocalist was ably supported by Vanamala Dikshit on the violin. If the Begade piece Vallabhanayakasya provided a pleasant start, it was reinforced with a chaste, but brief alap for Vachaspati (Kantachudu). The pick of the concert was the balanced representation Rohini gave to Shankarabharana. The kriti Shankaracharya was redolent with a neat 'niraval' and spacious

swara passages.

Shanmukhapriya was the mainstay in the veena recital of V.Veena (July 22, 8.30 a.m). Though the alap itself did not offer much by way of melodic delight, the kriti Marivere glowed with some elegant cadences. An unpardonable fax paus in the announcement marked the opening of V. Chitra's vocal recital later at 9.30 a.m. The name of the raga of Paramukha is Kanada, not Kannada as announced. The rendition itself could not do full justice to the popular GNB composition. But Chitra's voice attained an emotional touch as she intoned the line Niradharamu. That impact was, however, short lived as neither the alap for Saveri nor the familiar Kannada pada Parakumaadade could

vouch for a sustained technique.

Ananda-bhairavi (Manasa Guruguha) showed Suma Sudheendra (July 2, 8.30 a.m) in good fettle. The alap itself was marked for its precision, the kriti glorying in the famous 'Gopuchayati' foray. But Purvikalyani was not as convincing, having had to depend on the kriti (Meenakshim) for its credible design.

V.Kalavati's Shanmukhapriya had a dignified aura with meaningful stasis in the upper reaches. The lovely kriti Abhimanamuto was as emotional in its denouement, glorying in the effusion of lilting 'sangatis'. The rare devotional Rogaharana (Bageshri) was enjoyable due to its lyrical fidelity.

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In Lighter Vein

Frenzy of Festivals

Manu Vijay



Do you have a festival programme? You are now entitled to square your shoulders and strut a little, and oh! so politely, invite friends and foes alike to please witness the event.

'I'd love to have you,' Such is the esteem with which dancers hold festival programmes, vying with each other to perform in the pick of the season. And as Indians, we are festive the year round.

We have festivals for festivals - and celebrate Pongal, Ramanavami, Ugadi, Diwali, Dashera, Ganesh Chaturthi and what have you? Why! A festival every month of course!

We have festivals to celebrate the season-Vasanth habba, for instance festivals are organised at historical monuments to promote tourism -

Pattadakal, Hampi, Somanathpur, Badami, Mysore, Tala Cauvery - and all the tourism we have, is the entire artistic fraternity from Bangalore.

We have government festivals and non-government festivals - the former usually in dull, drab, areas, and the latter, full of sparkle and glamour, and yes, pots of money.

The non-government types can be further classified into two - the cigarette festivals and the non-cigarette festivals, the former again out-glamour the latter. Next time you have a smoke, remember a small part of the revenue, probably funds a musician or dancer. In addition, we have festivals with speeches and speeches with festivals - the latter are more popular with politicians and academicians

and the former with the dancers.

Festivals can also be technically classified - music cum dance festivals, dance drama festivals, solo dance festivals, modern dance festivals and so on. There are festivals with lectures, with seminars, festivals for the young, festivals for the old.

We have the well known festivals - Khajuraho, Surya, or an entire season of festivals as in Madras. We have failed, I think, in enumerating the most common sort - just festivals-festivals for no apparent rhyme or reason, occasion or season - just to have a festival!

In the mad frenzy of festivals, month after month, year after year, in the maze of dancers, performances, new items, experiments, innovations, and creations, I've forgotten to mention a basic ingredient. To be 'festive' of course - to breathe in the air of incense and jasmine, to live a few moments amongst the rustle of silks, and the strains of the tanpura, and peacefully coexist in atmosphere of artistic camaraderie and companionship.*

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Know your artistes
and
Editorial

Padmini Ravi:

Deftly Combining a Dual Role

S.N.Chandrashekar

When a dancer at the apex of her career as a performer takes to teaching, one tends to be a little sceptical of the venture. An inevitable busy schedule, one fears, may seldom permit her to be regular in her duties as a tutor. Besides, few artistes are known to effectively combine in themselves the dual role. For, the ability to teach presupposes not only the expertise of a performer, but also a sound and rational understanding of the idiom. Only then can it facilitate communication which is so essential to be a successful teacher.

One dancer who subscribes to such a proposition is Padmini Ravi, one of the senior-most artistes of the State. In her case it must be conceded that the two dispensations began almost simultaneously. That is when marriage made this graceful dancer shift her abode from Madras to Bangalore. That was two decades ago, in 1970 to be exact. Before that, as a senior student of K.J. Sarasa she had made a name as a competent dancer. The filial bond between the Guru and her prime disciple was so strong that even after Padmini settled down in her new home, Sarasa made it a custom to be present every time Padmini performed or introduced a student through a 'ranga pravesha'. She delighted to support either in Nattuvangam.

But initially, the conjugal compulsions had prevented Padmini from giving as much time to dance as she would wish. The result was frustration. The only therapy was dance. She was able to overcome the depression and the consequent ennui only after she resumed dancing.

Her very first appearance in the

City heralded Padmini's inherent talents and won laurels from professionals and students alike. That paved the way for setting up the Pradhan Dance Centre (1980) which instantly attracted a bevy of young, earnest girls and a couple of boys too. It speaks volumes for her tenacity that since then she has been steadfastly discharging the duties of a performer and teacher to the satisfaction of everyone concerned.

Padmini has been able to achieve such an enviable distinction entirely due to her studious devotion to the art, her searching mind looking for ideas from all available quarters so as to attain perfection in details. More important is her undivided loyalty to Bharathanatyam. While many a dancer to day is preoccupied with the impact of the whole, Padmini can be seen triumphing in subtle nuances, her outings marked for precision in line and rhythm.

Indeed, seldom can one find such exactitude in the all important 'aramandi' stance, the full gravity of which is not easily maintainable due to the increasing complex Adavus that complement it. But its ability to lend strength and character to the form can never be over-emphasised.

The other virtue in Padmini is fluidity. It is this special characteristic, flexion-filled, languorous angikas that make Padmini's dance a wondrous spectacle. A Nritha with such attributes could be a near treat and if a dancer is endowed with a command on her 'mukhija' as it is often in Padmini's abhinaya, the result can be a class apart.

No wonder she has been recognised as one of the top artistes in

the genre today. The coveted invitation to her to dance in the ensuing annual music festival of the prestigious Music Academy, Madras and in the inaugural of the Karnataka Utsav in New Delhi earlier in the last week of September are eloquent testimonies to her reputation as a sensitive dancer. These are besides the many other precious appearances earlier.

It is for the same reason that dancers and dance enthusiasts in the other parts of the globe like Germany, Holland, Switzerland and several cultural centres in the United States are craving to see her dance and are constantly drafting her services to brush up their styles. Thus, like many of her compeers like the Dhananjayans, Kalanidhi, Narmada, to name only a few, Padmini has become a peripatetic performer-teacher of international repute which is as it should be.

As she confesses, it has become a hectic schedule, and challenging as far as fixing priorities is concerned. But it is not without its own edifying prospect of nurturing many talent, an endeavour that has given her immense pleasure and satisfaction. Already there are among her local students names that have made a grade like the Kirans (Sandhya and Subramaniam), Nivedita, Nandita, Hema, Hamsni, Preeti, her own daughter Lakshmi whose proficiency in Nattuvangam is unquestionable, and many others. With her unstinted approach, there is no doubt that she would soon add some more names to the list from across the seas. They will ensure a continuity of the illustrious line of Pradhan Dance Centre. That is a contribution that should do proud to any artiste worth the name! ■

Where are We Headidng?

Padmini Ravi

People at the beginning of Thretayuga were leading a mixed life of misery and happiness subjecting themselves to the elemental passion of lust, greed and musuility. So in order to inculcate into them the spirit of adhering to the just way of life, Brahma was approached and the Natya Veda was created in the hope of creating intellectual advancement and leading people towards righteousness and proper order of living.

Times have changed. Attitudes have changed. Values have changed and more than anything we have changed. We are walking through a phase where people are no more interested in the values of life. The word culture, when defined, means a way of life. India could boast all these years of her ancient cultural heritage, which really meant the positive way of life of an extremely brilliant race of people. But no more, today, because we no more have it. India is going through a dark phase culturally. A sad phase not worthy of its great heritage.

The world is progressing and the technological and scientific achievements have positively confuted India culturally.

When a civilisation is progressing there is nothing negative about it. But ironically it is not positive progress that we see today. Ours is a civilisation which is so sophisticated and advanced with 5000 year history. India has produced some of the greatest men in every field. But why sudden degeneration of values all around us?

Analysed from the angle of a classical performing art- dance, it has just become an old tradition without direc-

tion. Let us look at the prevailing situation with a sense of detachment. A dancer, when asked whether she is happy being a dancer, says no. Because she has no platform to perform and she does not get what she deserves. A teacher when asked, says he or she is not happy. Because there is a very synthetic interest among the students and she gets no satisfaction. When organisers are asked whether they would put up classical dance performance, the answer is no. Because they are not able to get a crowd. When sponsors are asked for support, the answer is no. Because in their own language they do not get any mileage.

So, a 2000 year old tradition is not wanted by anyone. If I am a dancer, I am deeply hurt, because after helping a civilisation for so many years, now comes a day when no body wants me.

Who is responsible for this situation? Whose fault is it anyway? Each one of us is responsible. This age old tradition had survived in some form or the other which can be found through literary and historical evidence. But the form in which it exists today is just about a little over 100 years old. As is well known by every one the Devadasi system (temple dancers) was abolished in 1948 to change the art form. Here too we see dance having been abused for no mistake of it. Dance which originated as an entertainment, slowly got transformed as a temple ritual. Bharatha has never mentioned what to do but just how to do.

So we transformed dance into a temple art. We made it dirty and finally we purified it by abolishing the Devadasi tradition and giving it a status.

But did it help? Yes, but only for sometime. The term 'shringara' or the element of love was cautiously wiped out and 'bhakti' or devotion became the ultimate goal of dance. The contradiction is but glaring. Temples which are places of worship where dance existed could not hold the purity which meant that it was we the people who were responsible and not the art or the artistes.

When dance came to the auditoriums and became a prestigious art form to be learnt by the elite we are facing many problems. During evolution different problems are faced at different times which have to be dealt differently. So, when the Devadasi system was abolished "erotic love" had to be eliminated and the terms 'spiritual love' and 'Indian sacred dance' had to be used. But in an age where Western culture has, unfortunately, become so popular through media these terms have no significance. Today dance is a product which has to be marketed under the guise of sacredness. In a totally materialistic world spirituality has no place. So why misuse the word tradition and ruin the art form?

Bharatanatyam, a very rich and self-sufficient form, today is in great danger. People who learn, do so for the wrong reasons. People who promote for selfish reasons and of course the people who watch, consider it a punishment. Why is this happening? It is because of the narrow mindedness of the so called purists. Dance in the form which exists today can in no way be called an old traditional style. The purists or the premier institutions which regenerated dance have unfortunately become so close minded and

self appreciative, that they have stopped growing. Anything that does not evolve stagnates. Art is self expression. When an individual stops thinking, art stagnates. Unfortunately artistes either do not think or they are not allowed to think. This is a fast moving world where everything and everyone around us has changed. Dance has become outdated and thus no one wants it. What can we do to repair the situation? Each one of us has to strip the ego and and come out of the cocoon of selfishness and think of dance and not of ourselves.

While learning or performing, let

us think and accentuate the brilliance of the form and give the audience something that will make them think and lead them to a righteous life as Bharatha wanted. Let us make the audience happy, which does not mean that the level of the art has to be reduced, which has become a common line of argument by the purists. But by relating to them in a way that art form will not die. One fears whether there would be any one to patronise or enjoy this traditional form and anything that is not patronised and enjoyed will die a natural death. Where is this tradition heading to? ■

Music Organisations of Bombay

Many of our readers want the addresses of music sabhas. Here are the addresses of prominent music organisations in Bombay.

Fine Arts Society
Plot 16/21, R.C.Marg, Chembur, Bombay 400071

Karnataka Sangha Dr M. Visveswaraya Smarak Mandir
Moghul Lane, Near Matunga Road, Station, Mahim (W), Bombay 400016

Mulund Fine Arts
1 Padmavathi, Opp Valjee Road, Mulund (W), Bombay 400080

Nehru Centre
Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli, Bombay 400018

N C P A (Subhash Chandran)
Dorabji Tata Road, Nariman Point, Bombay 400021

Rasika Ranjani Sabha
2/22 Savithri Kunj, Garodia Nagar, Ghatkopar (E), Bombay 400077

Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha
4/2, 11-A, Kirti Kunj, Deodhar Road, Matunga, Bombay 400019

Music Triangle
N.S.Vasan, Om Shanti, 16th Road, Bombay 400054

Bharatiya Music and Arts Society
Bhaudaji Road Extension, Matunga, Bombay 400019

Sree Vallabh Sangeethalaya
Sion (W), Bombay 400016

Bhakta Rasika Ranjani Sabha
17/C Kanchanjunga, Anushakthi Nagar, Bombay 400074

Bandup Fine Arts
B/705 Usha Nagar, Bhandup, Bombay 400078

The Fine Arts Society
R. Chemburkar Marg, Chembur, Bombay 400071

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
Chowpatty, Bombay 400022

Sangeet Mahabarati
10th Road, Juhu Vile Parle Development Scheme, Bombay 400049

Music Triangle
C-4 Sahakar 5th Road, Santacruz (E), Bombay 400055

Sri Tyagaraja Sabha
Matunga, Bombay 400019

Naadayala
Anish Apartments, I Floor, Amdheri (E) Bombay 400069

Artistes' Foreign Tours

K.S.Gopalakrishnan (flute), **M. Chandrasekharan** (violin) and **Guruvayur Dorai** (mridangam) left on September 4 to USA and Canada on a ten day concert tour.

Aruna Sairam (vocal), **R. Hemalatha** (violin), **M.R. Sainath** (mridangam) and **Sukanya Ramagopal** (ghatam) are leaving on September 18, to Switzerland and European countries.

Amrutha Narain (vocal), **M.S. Govindaswamy** (violin) and **M.A. Krishnamurthy** (mridangam) on a 12 week tour to USA.

For a close-up
view of
music and dance
scenario
read

PHOENIX

Tuneful Encounters-8

The Genial Vainika

S.N.Sivaswamy

I had met Doreswamy Iyengar much before we came to work together at AIR, Bangalore. He was performing regularly at AIR, Madras, when I was there as a Programme Executive, way back in the forties.

Ours was always a happy get together of two Kannadigas. I had the privilege of hearing in first person Doreswamy Iyengar's great guru, Venkatagiriappa also at the Madras station of AIR.

Every visit of Doreswamy Iyengar to Madras was for me a new experience as he varied his repertoire every time. More than, it was his genial personality, his ready beaming smile and his spirit of cooperation shown during a recording or a live concert endeared him to me and my colleagues.

Later, when he was producer of music at AIR, Bangalore, I had the pleasure of his company everyday, at official meetings, at the coffee house, and across our office tables. We sat together with P.T. Narasimhachar, the great poet, for the production of his delightful operas.

Narasimhachar had a musical form in his mind for every one of his compositions but could not identify the ragas or could hum the tunes out for us. It took Doreswamy Iyengar's genius to fathom the poet's inner most mind and come out with the right tune every time. I consider those meetings with the great artistic talents as among my most memorable musical experiences.

Much later, when I had retired from AIR and Doordarshan, I spent a little time every year at Madras during

the music festivals, when I attended many a concert by eminent musicians, along with my wife and my father in law. One such concert we chose to attend was Doreswamy Iyengar's veena recital. The concert hall was in Oliver Road, and the three of us had seats in the front row. For the main raga of the concert Doreswamy Iyengar had selected Mohana ('Mohana Rama' if I remember). Honestly, till then I had my misgivings about the sustaining quality of Mohana. When

I mentioned this to my father in law, an ardent music lover, he said Mohana was among the most beautiful ragas. And Doreswamy Iyengar proved it that day with a scintillating rendering of the raga.

At the end of the concert, when I went up the dais to congratulate Doreswamy Iyengar on the excellence of his performance, he stunned me with the modesty of his reply, "how can it be otherwise when rasikas like you are sitting in front of me!"

The Glory of Indian Music

The art of music is the heart of Indian culture. Its origin can be traced back to the hoary past. It sprung from the divine feet of Goddess Saraswathi.

Later slowly but steadily it grew into a Ganges of superbly modulated melody. This Ganges spread across the sprawling length and breadth of India collecting into itself several tributaries of music from the great masters of the different states of India.

The golden fingers of our ancient virtuosos had perfected the technicalities and sound sweetness of music. They practised music as a divine tapasya. For them music was a sadhana, a concentrated effort of heart and soul to reach the glorious end a moksha.

In India, music is intended to serve the religious and spiritual needs of human soul. Indian musicians express their religious and spiritual aspirations through this sweet medium of sound.

The large sky of Indian music is studded with the most brilliant stars like Tyagaraja, Tansen etc. Every state has produced its own sublime stars.

On the holy soil of India, Valmiki sang the song of Ramayana, Vyasa tuned the melodies of Mahabharatha, Jayadeva enthralled and captivated India by the sweetest turns of music in his Gita Govinda. Above all Sri Krishna's flute-melodies in Brindavan stirring for ever in the hearts of all people. It is an unforgettable experience to listen to any inspired piece of music of a truly great master.

So every Indian born on this sanctified soil can be happily proud of the great tradition of music that has become a Ganges of melody flowing through the hearts of all who come in touch with India's entrancing songs of pure sweetness.

M.C.Narasaraju
Chirala

City Dancer Featured in Mumbai Fete



Padmaja Suresh



Gopika Verma

Ritu Sringara, a dance feature based on apposite verses in Hindi and tuned to a blend of Carnatic and Hindustani melodies, was the highlight of the three-day Mini Monsoon festival of music and dance of the Fine Arts Society of Chembur, started on July 26.

The feature was choreographed and danced by Padmaja Suresh of Bangalore, daughter of K.K. Rajan, a votary of Chakiyar Koothu. Padmaja is proficient in both Bharathanatyam and Kathak.

On the second day, Gopika Verma, a student of Kalyani Kutti Amma doyen of Mohiniattam, gave an exposition for a selection of Swati Tirunal compositions in that style.

A unique 'jugalbandhi' involving popular Kadri Gopalnath on Saxophone and Ronu Majumdar of Calcutta on the flute provided a fitting finale to the enjoyable fete. A. Kanyakumari on the violin, Guruvayoor Dorai on mridangam and Abhijeet Banerjee on tabla were the accompanying artistes in the event for the first time in Mumbai.

In the Society's talent promotion concert, two young aspirants were featured. While Gouri Krishnamoorthi, a student of Soundarya Natya Kalalaya (Garodia Nagar), impressed with her Bharathanatyam, Vidya Rajeev presented a Carnatic vocal recital. Narayan Parthasarathy (violin), Gouri Shankar (mridangam) and Hari (kanjira) formed the supporting team for her recital.

Rain Drops

A two day festival of classical dance was organised at the Godrej Dance Academy Theatre, Bombay on July 5 and 6, 96.

Indrani Mukherjee (Kathak), Debi Baso (Odissi), Madhuri Patil (Mohiniattam) and Vaibhav Arekar (Bharatanatyam) gave performances.

Meenakshi Seshadri, student of Charumathi Ramachandran gave a Carnatic vocal performance at the Mulund Fine Arts, Bombay on June 3, 96. She was accompanied by Vijayaraghavan (violin) and Pavaranagan (mridangam).

A lecture demonstration on the role of the bandish in Khayalgayaki was organised at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay on July 7, 96.

V.R. Athavale, a scholar of music initiated the debate. Traditional bandishes were presented by his disciple, Nisha Nigalye Parasnis.

Advertise in
PHOENIX

More Youngsters to the Fore in Devnandan Fest

The Devnandan Yuva Sangeetotsav, celebrating its decennary this year, has gained an important place in the cultural calendar of the City. With the launching of Smriti-Nandan, a cultural centre by Lalita Ubhaykar, the well-known Hindustani vocalist, the annual fete jointly organised by her and Sursagar has ensured a permanency for the popular festival.

Many young aspirants who have figured in this annual have now grown in stature, winning laurels for themselves and their gurus. Some of them like Shubendra Rao (sitar), Rupak Kulkarni (flute), Rashid Khan (vocal), Sangeeta Shankar (violin), Subhra Guha (vocal), Yogesh Samsi (tabla), Sanjeev Abhayankar (vocal), Sarathy Chatterjee (vocal), Gundecha Brothers (vocal-Dhrupad), and many others are in demand all over the country and abroad. The sponsors of the festival justly feel proud that they had provided the spring board for their blooming into mature artistes.

The current festival which started on August 17, featured seven artistes, including a husband and wife team and the Gundecha brothers. One dare say all of them showed promise, while the Dhrupad duo for whom this is a repeat appearance after their debut in 1992, it was a tryst with a familial ambience.

The other duo was Sriram Parasuram and Anuradha Sriram, Madras. Sriram is an accomplished violinist in the Carnatic style. C.R. Vyas is his Guru in the Hindustani style which has already won for him several awards, including the Surmani and the Amir Khan memorial. Presently he is the Executive Director of Sampradaya, a Ford Foundation

funded research institute in Madras.

His wife Anuradha is no less distinguished. Well versed in all the three styles of music as Sriram, she is a well-known play-back singer for Tamil and Hindi movies, winning the Dr J. Jayalalitha Cine Award for the best female play-back singer in Tamil for 1995. She also has the awesome distinction of winning a platinum disc for record sales of her song in the Hindi film Ram Jane.

In their morning concert the two some aired a rare raga Sagara, believed to have been created by the guru of Sriram's guru C.R. Vyas. It was pleasant listening, though the more familiar Miya-ki-Malhar was not as evocative. But their style, the vibrant sonority of Sriram romantically balanced in Anuradha's flashy tonality was enjoyable.

The two-day fare got to a bright start with the vocal refrain of Kirtikumar Badseshi, a senior student of Vinayak Torvi. He presented khayals in Bhoop and Bhinnashadj. His mellow voice makes for a lyrical appeal. As impressive was the flute recital of Rupak Kulkarni, a student of veteran Hariprasad Chaurasiya. His Bageshri was elaborate with spacious taans, though short in resonance. The other artiste was also an instrumentalist. Pradeek Chaudhury the sitarist is the son of the seasoned Debu Chaudhury. The youngster is an M.A (Music) of the Delhi University. His Gurjari Thodi revealed a proportioned representation of the morning melody.

The artistes were supported by as competent a team of ebullient youths comprising Udayaraj Karpur and Anis Pradhan on table and the dependable Vyasamurthy Katti on the harmonium.

Agenda for September

Maharashtra Apex Festival by Nadanta Academy of Dance and Music

Nadanta Academy of Dance and Music, Bangalore is organising the Maharashtra Apex-Parampara festival from September 27 to 29, 96.

Venue: Bangalore Gayana Samaja
September 27.

6-15 pm: Saxophone recital by Kadri Gopalnath, Kanyakumari (violin), Bangalore Pravin (mridangam), Srishaila (ghata) and B. Rajashekar (morching).

7-50 pm: Sugama Sangitha by Puttur Narasimha Nayak and Snehaja Praveen.

September 28.

Venue: Ravindra Kalakshetra

6-00 pm: Vocal concert by Sri Vidyabhushana Thirtha Swamiji, B.U. Ganesh Prasad (violin), Anantha Subramanyam (mridangam) and M.A. Krishnamurthy (ghatam).

7-35 pm: Hindusthani vocal by Parameshwar Hegde, Vyasamurthy Katti (Harmonium) and Ravindra Yavgal (Tabla).

September 29.

Venue: Ravindrakalakshetra

6-00 pm: Vocal recital by T.V. Ramaprasad, V.N. Ravi (violin), Umayalapuram Sivaraman (mridangam) and T.V. Vasan (ghatam).

7-45 pm: Dance- Bhavya Rama Katha by Kiran Subramanyam and Sandhya Kiran, a dance festure on Lord Rama.

Festival sponsored by:
Maharashtra Apex Corporation Ltd, Manipal

From Here and There

Laya Nada Sangam

Sri Vani School of Music and the Nandi Talavadya Academy had an interesting, composite programme to celebrate their anniversary on August 12 at Yavanika. After an impressive veena recital by master T. Pramodkumar, Laya Vidwan M. Vasudeva Rao released a cassette entitled Laya Nada Sangam, directed by S.V. Giridhar. Later, A.V. Prakash of Mysore on the flute assisted by M.S. Govindaswamy on the violin and Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma on the mridangam gave the lead for an absorbing percussion interlude.

Bangalore K. Venkatram who was the chief guest on the occasion, honoured artistes, M.S. Srinivasamurthy (flute), B.R. Seshadri (mridanga), Padmini Rao (Bharathanatyam) and R.S. Anantharamaiah (percussion).

Homage to Chittibabu

On August 18, the local Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and the Chittibabu Memorial Committee, joined together to pay homage to the veena maestro who passed away recently. A veena quartet by four youngsters led the Shraddhanjali to the popular Guru who had among his many students the local favourites Suma Sudheendra and Shanti Rao. It was followed by brief recitals on the veena by R.K. Suryanarayana, Rajalakshmi Tirunakaran, Shanti Rao and Suma Sudheendra. V.S. Rajagopal on mridangam and B.K. Chandramouli on Kanjira accompanied them.

A dance feature based on the veteran's compositions by the students of Padmini Ramachandran and a video-visual cassette clipping of the master formed part of the programme.

Rich tributes were paid by B.V.K. Sastry, S.N. Chandrasekhar, S. Ramachandran and Bhaskar.

Maithri

Maithri, the cultural wing of the State Bank of India on August 17 had got up a pleasant function for the release of a cassette of Hindustani vocal

by one of its proud employee K.V. Nandakumar. The cassette was released by Y.K. Muddukrishna, director Kannada and Culture, Government of Karnataka, SBI General Manager V.R. Gundannavar presided over the function.

The pleasant function concluded after the vocal recital by Nandakumar who was accompanied on the tabla by M. Nagesh and on the harmonium by Umakant Puranik.

New Sabha Remembers B.N. Suresh



T.V. Gopalakrishnan inaugurating the festival

Over 300 students of schools and colleges in various parts of the City took part in a youth music festival and competition to pay homage to flutist B.N. Suresh at the Odakattur Math recently.

The three-day fiesta from July 26 was organised by the Indian Institute of Music and Arts (IIMA) of Kalyana Nagar, thus launching another Sabha in the City. Prizes were given away in as many as 26 categories, including dance and music.

Mridangam maestro T.V. Gopalakrishnan who presided over the valedictory function and also headed the panel of judges, exhorted young musicians to adopt a professional ap-

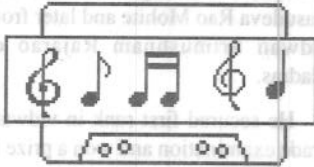
proach so as to face any situation in a concert or a competition.

In her welcome address, IIMA Managing Trustee, Lochana Ashok Kumar disclosed that the Institute besides the annual competition, would organise workshops in the different aspects of music in different parts of the City.

Brief recital by outstanding prize-winners was an added attraction at the function.

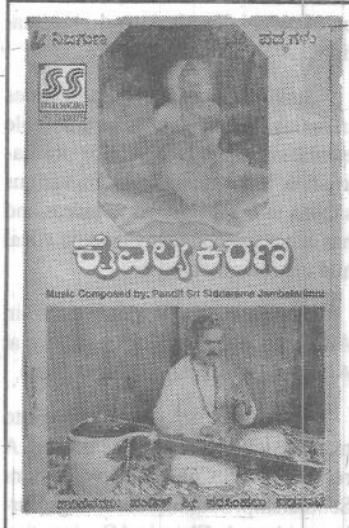
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Cassette



Causerie

Kaivalya Kirana



Kaivalya Kirana by Pandit Narasimhalu Vadavati (Svara Sangama, Raichur SS 001 Stereo Rs 35-00)

SWARA SANGAMA of Raichur under the banner of SS Stereo (SS-001) could not have thought of a more enduring collection to launch its cassette series than the priceless lyrics of Nijaguna Shivayogi, the well-known mystic. The seven lyrics under the title "Kaivalya Kirana" were set to music by the late Siddarama Jambaldanni, one of the most popular singers of the lighter variety like Vachanas, Tattva Padas, etc. He had popularised many of them during his life time.

The artiste who has rendered the seven lyrics is the well-known clarinet-player Narasimhulu

Vadavati. A disciple of Pandit Jambaldanni, one dare say he has imbibed the sensitive style of his mentor convincingly. As one mulls over the pieces in Bhimpalas, Maru-Behag, Chayanat and so on, it is revealing that Narasimhulu should be as impactful in his vocalisation as in his blowing technique. He has a pleasing voice and he uses it tunelessly.

It augurs well for the cassette series and to Narasimhulu himself that the venture was blessed by the senior-most guru of the tradition, Pandit Puttaraj Gawai who released it in Raichur on the occasion of the 57th death anniversary observance of Panchakshari Gawai.

Stotra Sudha Lahari



Stotra Sudha Lahari by M.A. Meera and M.A. Mythili. Devotional Stotras in Sanskrit on Venkateswara and Krishna (Bhakti Dhvani, Bangalore Stereo Rs 33-00).

JAGGU Singriengar's Venkatesha Padavalamba Stotra is as sacred to Srivaishnavites as the ageless Sri Krishnakarnamrita of Leela Suka. The devout recite them in their daily prayers.

The two masterpieces have been

set to music by Tirumale Srinivas. Meera and Maithili, the talented daughters of Vidwan M.A. Narasimhachar have rendered them as articulately and in a style which is striking for its lyrical overtones.

The cassette of this rendition has been made by Bhakti Dhvani (Ganakala Mandira, 162/107, III Cross/V main, Thyagarajanagar, Bangalore - 560028). It makes for good listening.

Dasa Sankeertane



Dasa Sankeertane by N. Sreemathi Jayaram. (Sree Productions, Bangalore Stereo Rs 30-00).

The devoted fervour in the mellow voice of Sreemathi Jayaram brings alive some of the most popular compositions of the celebrated saint singers of Karnataka in a cassette released by Sree Productions (220/25, III Main, Vyalikaval, Bangalore 560003). The tunes set to these ditties of famous Kannada literati have a lingering impact, exemplifying their expressive lyricism. One of them duetted by Sreemathi with H.K. Narayana (Kamala Komala) stands out for its sonorous quietude.

Know your Artistes

H.S.Venugopal



Flautist H.S. Venugopal(37), popularly known as Venu amongst his friends, had his initial training under vidwan A.V. Prakash of Mysore when he was 14 and later from vidwan M.S. Srinivasa Murthy of Bangalore. He has been performing both as a solo musician and accompanying artiste and has participated in many music festivals at major cultural centres all over the country.

Born in Mayasandra in Tumkur district to H. Srinivasa Murthy, who was a school teacher and H.S. Jayalakshmi, had his schooling at Mayasandra and joined his grand mother, Rukminiamma, a singer at Mysore and pursued his education there. After graduating from the Mysore University in 1978 he joined Indian Bank in 1979. He is now a cashier at the K.G. Road branch.

Venu is a popular artiste among dance troupes. He has performed at the Ugadi music festival at Mysore in 1991 and has participated in programmes organised by the Department of Kannada and Culture, Government of Karnataka and Indian Council for Cultural Relations for National Integration, Doordarshan and AIR. He has

taken part in the unity concerts for National Integration organised by the Madras Telugu Academy at New Delhi.

He was one of the members of the troupe in Dr Francis Barboza Ensemble which extensively toured Germany and other European countries and took part in the Musica Sacra International, a musical meeting of major world religions at Marktoberdorf, Germany and in the festival, Rituelen Festival in Tongeren Belgium.

Venugopal, apart from playing for dance performances has also composed music for many dance ballet and devotional songs. The devotional songs cassette, Chandana, released by the G.M.L. Academy of Bangalore was composed by him.

H.S.Venugopal, 61, II cross, III East Main, ITI Layout, Behind Vidyapeeta, Bangalore 560085.

H.S.Sudhindra



H.S.Sudhindra (28), is a popular young mridangam artiste of Bangalore who had his training from vidwan N. Vasudeva Rao Mohite and later from vidwan Srimushnam Rajarao of Madras.

He secured first rank in vidwath grade examination and won a prize in the talavadya competition conducted by the Karnataka Sangitha Nrithya Academy in 1994.

He participated in the classical music orchestra in 1989 directed by Sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan on National Youth Award presentation.

Sudhindra regularly participates in the layalahari, percussion ensemble established by late Anoor Ramakrishna. He has performed in various sahbas in Bangalore and Madras and has accompanied many leading vocal and instrumental artistes.

Sudhindra is a 'B' grade artiste in AIR and is performing regularly at AIR and Doordarshan programmes.

He has lent percussion support to many artistes in recording cassettes. A recipient of Central Government Scholarship, Sudhindra is an engineering graduate in Electrical Engineering from Bangalore University.

H.S.Sudhindra, 12, 28th cross, Geetha Colony, 4th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore 560011 ☎ 6633623.

A.P.Rao

Dear Reader

Your comments and views are most valuable to us and the others too. We shall gladly publish the best. But, for maximum impact and better coverage, make them brief. Send your comments to:

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